



The Polio Post

Ohio Polio Network Newsletter
Summer 2019 issue

On Disability and on Facebook? Uncle Sam Wants to Watch What You Post



In its budget request to Congress last year, Social Security said it would study whether to expand the use of social media networks in disability determinations, partly to help identify fraud. Credit Mark Abramson for The New York Times

By [Robert Pear](#)

• **March 10, 2019**

· WASHINGTON — If you’re on federal disability payments and on social media, be careful what you post. Uncle Sam wants to watch.

The Trump administration has been quietly working on a proposal to use social media like Facebook and Twitter to help identify people who claim Social Security disability benefits without actually being disabled. If, for example, a person claimed benefits because of a back injury but was shown playing golf in a photograph posted on Facebook, that could be used as evidence that the injury was not disabling.

“There is a little bitty chance that Social Security may be snooping on your Facebook or your Twitter account,” Robert A. Crowe, a lawyer from St. Louis who has represented Social Security disability claimants for more than 40 years, said he cautioned new clients. “You don’t want anything on there that shows you out playing Frisbee.”

Editor: Alice Sporar

Inside this Issue

Pride XLR USB Charger	4
Greyhound Disability Settlement	4
In Memorial, Anita Post	5
In Memorial, Patty Barbarow	5
Bruno Bytes	6
Airlines Damaged 1,975 Wheelchairs in 3 Months	6
Doctor’s Tip: Immunizations: Seeing is believing	8
Post-Polio Contact Information	9



In its budget request to Congress last year, Social Security said it would study whether to expand the use of social media networks in disability determinations as a way to “increase program integrity and expedite the identification of fraud.”

Since then, administration officials said, the White House has been actively working with Social Security to flesh out the proposal, in the belief that social media could be a treasure trove of information about people who are applying for or receiving disability benefits.

Some members of Congress, like Senator James Lankford, Republican of Oklahoma, and some conservative organizations, like the Heritage Foundation in Washington, have supported the idea as part of a broader effort to prevent the payment of disability benefits to people who are able to work.

But advocates for people with disabilities say the use of social media in this way would be dangerous because photos posted there do not always provide reliable evidence of a person’s current condition.

“It may be difficult to tell when a photograph was taken,” said Lisa D. Ekman, a lawyer who is the chairwoman of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, a coalition of advocacy groups. “Just because someone posted a photograph of them golfing or going fishing in February of 2019 does not mean that the activity occurred in 2019.”

Moreover, people are more likely to post pictures of themselves when they are happy and healthy than when they are in a wheelchair or a hospital bed.

When he announced his candidacy in June 2015, Mr. Trump maintained that position: “Save Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security without cuts. Have to do it. Get rid of the fraud. Get rid of the waste and abuse, but save it.”

But his budgets in the last two years have proposed reductions in the disability insurance program, which has been part of Social Security since 1956.

The president’s budget director, Mick Mulvaney, who is now also the acting White House chief of staff, has suggested that Mr. Trump’s campaign commitment does not cover disability benefits.

“Do you really think that Social Security disability insurance is part of what people think of when they think of Social Security?” Mr. Mulvaney asked on CBS’s “Face the Nation” in 2017.

“I don’t think so. It’s the fastest growing program. It was — it grew tremendously under President Obama. It’s a very wasteful program, and we want to try and fix that.”

Brian C. Blase, a special assistant to the president for economic policy, has been coordinating development of the new proposals on Social Security. In 2014, Mr. Blase provided the staff work for a subcommittee investigation of the disability program led by Mr. Lankford, who was then a member of the House. Soon after he got to the Senate, Mr. Lankford proposed legislation to expand the use of “evidence obtained from publicly available social media.”

At present, disability examiners do not routinely look at social media. They can refer suspicious cases to the inspector general for Social Security, who may use social media to corroborate information from other sources in fraud investigations conducted with state and local law enforcement agencies.

The Trump administration contends that it could authorize greater use of social media by regulation, without action by Congress. Under pressure from the White House, Social Security has drafted a timeline that envisions publication of a final rule in the spring of 2020.

Michael J. Astrue, the last Senate-confirmed Social Security commissioner, has expressed misgivings about the idea.

“Social media sites are not exactly clear and reliable evidence,” Mr. Astrue, who stepped down six years ago, said at a Senate hearing in 2012. “Facebook puts up phony websites under my name all the time.”

That, he said, is “why you need professionally trained fraud investigators” to evaluate the information.

Few would say that the Social Security disability program was free of fraud. The government has secured guilty pleas from a number of people who concealed the fact that they were working in various industries while drawing Social Security disability benefits.

In one case, a 57-year-old Louisiana man pleaded guilty last month to theft of government funds. He had received \$2,177 a month in benefits — a total of \$242,000 — while employed by companies that did demolition work and job site cleaning. He also operated heavy construction equipment. He told federal investigators that the companies had been registered in the names of family members, rather than his own name, “so y’all wouldn’t find out about it,” according to court records.

In its latest financial report, Social Security estimated that it made \$3.4 billion in overpayments to disability insurance beneficiaries in 2017, in part because of their failure to report work activities.

The program has been “riddled with problems, including fraud and abuse,” said Rachel Greszler, a research fellow at the Heritage Foundation. When people who can work collect benefits, she said, “it drains the system for those who truly cannot work and support themselves.”

The administration’s focus on fraud comes as the number of Americans seeking Social Security disability benefits is plunging. The number of applications was down 29 percent last year from a peak of 2.9 million in 2010.

A growing economy with strong demand for workers is one reason for the decline, officials say. In addition, they speculate that with new technology and the potential for teleworking, it is possible for some people to take jobs even though they have medical conditions that would have precluded work in the past.

Social Security officials are considering other changes that could make it more difficult for people to qualify for benefits.

They are working with the White House to overhaul the way Social Security weighs various “vocational factors” — age, education and job experience — in deciding whether a person is able to work.

In November, Social Security proposed a new rule that would strip applicants and beneficiaries of their right to an in-person hearing before an administrative law judge, after some judges came under scrutiny for leniency in allowing disability claims. In 2017, a former administrative law judge for the Social Security Administration pleaded guilty for his role in a scheme to fraudulently obtain more than \$550 million in federal disability payments for thousands of claimants.

Under the November proposal, Social Security could hold the hearings by video conference even if a claimant objected. With video conferencing, the agency said, it could improve service to the public and reduce wait times. At present, it said, nearly 860,000 people are waiting an average of 19 months for hearings to appeal the denial or termination of benefits.

But top Democrats responsible for Social Security policy in Congress denounced the proposal in a letter to the acting Social Security commissioner, Nancy A. Berryhill.

“This change would deprive millions of Americans of their constitutional right to due process and result in hearings which are less fair and less efficient,” said the letter, signed by Representative Richard E. Neal of Massachusetts, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon,

the senior Democrat on the Finance Committee, among others.

A version of this article appears in print on March 11, 2019, on Page A13 of the New York edition with the headline: Collecting Disability? Uncle Sam May Not Be a Friend on Social Media.

Mark Abramson for The New York Times

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Post-Polio Directory 2018: <http://www.post-polio.org/net/PDIR.pdf>



PRIDE XLR USB CHARGER

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Reprinted from Boca Area Post-Polio Group, April, 2019.

Over \$3 Million Paid to Individuals in Disability Settlement With Greyhound

The Department of Justice today announced payments by Greyhound Lines, Inc. totaling \$2,966,000 to over 2,100 individuals who experienced disability discrimination while traveling or attempting to travel on Greyhound.

The payments were part of a broader settlement from 2016 resolving the Department's complaint that Greyhound, the nation's largest provider of intercity bus transportation, engaged in a nationwide pattern or practice of violating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by failing to provide full and equal transportation services to passengers with disabilities.

The \$2,966,000 amount is in addition to \$300,000 paid by Greyhound in 2016 to specific individuals identified by the Department, bringing the total distributed to individuals to over \$3,250,000.

To read the press release regarding this event, click [here](#). For more information about the ADA, call the Department's toll-free ADA Information Line at 800-514-0301 (TDD 800-514-0383) or access the ADA website at www.ada.gov. Press Release (posted 5/2/19)

Ada.gov United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division



Anita (Roseman) Post

October 4, 1947 - April 8, 2019

IN LOVING MEMORY OF ANITA POST.... Most of you have known our dear member, Anita Post, over the many years she was a member of our support group. It is with great sadness to inform you she recently passed away with her family by her side. She had a bad fall, falling backwards and hitting her head, and was taken immediately into hospice. She remained there close to three weeks and had rebounded somewhat, though suddenly spiraled downward and passed peacefully on April 8, 2019.

Anita was born on October 4, 1947 and was a wonderful wife to her husband, Harvey, and a great mother to her two daughters, Wendy and Marla and loved the joy of being a grandmother. Her career was being a pre-school teacher. She loved to laugh, had a great sense of humor, always had a smile on her face and always thought of other people.

Anita got polio in her upper torso. She suffered from complications of post-polio syndrome and put up a strong fight for many years. Anita never felt sorry for herself. Once she had rods placed in her back, she suffered with a great deal of pain. Years back, as a member of our group, Anita was quite active in the early 90's, helped with the newsletter and was involved in many of its activities, as well as being a member of the ladies' group (the Ya-Ya's) a couple decades ago who met monthly.

Anita will be deeply missed by our entire support group, as well as all who knew her, though she remains in our hearts always. Our polio group has sent a donation to Western Reserve in Medina, a charity the family requested in her memory. - Brenda Ferguson



Patty Ann Matheny Barbarow

August 30, 1936 - May 25, 2019

Patty Ann Matheny Barbarow, 82, of Parkersburg passed away on the morning of Saturday, May 25, 2019 peacefully at her home, surrounded by family.

She was born in Troy, West Virginia on August 30, 1936 to the late Brooks and Bonnie Rymer Matheny. She attended Troy High School, graduating in 1954 and serving as Class President. After high school, she attended Glenville State College, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education. She later went back and earned a Master's Degree in Education from West Virginia University.

She is survived by one son, Phil (Traci) Barbarow of Parkersburg; three grandchildren, Seth, Jake, and Izzy Barbarow of Parkersburg; one brother, Billy Matheny of Scottsdale, Arizona, and several nieces, nephews, and close friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband Berkley Barbarow Jr. and son Joe Barbarow.

She was a member of Cedar Grove United Methodist Church for over 50 years, where she faithfully attended and served in numerous capacities, including being a member of the United Methodist Women.

She was a member of the Mid-Ohio Valley Post-Polio Support group, along with the local ostomy association.

She taught at several elementary schools in Wood County, spending the last 20 plus years at Jefferson Elementary Center in the Title I program. She was a dedicated and caring teacher, with a passion for helping her students. Visitation will be from 5-8 p.m. on Thursday, May 30, 2019 at Leavitt's Funeral Home in Downtown Parkersburg. Memorial service will be Friday, May 31, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. at Cedar Grove UMC, with burial to follow at Sunset Memory Gardens.

Bruno “Bytes” March, 2019
From Dr. Richard L. Bruno, HD, PhD
Bits and Tidbits from the Post-Polio Coffee House

On the topic of Dr. Bruno’s Video Library (3/1/2019)

Original Post: There is a video library with Dr. Bruno’s conferences and interviews in the “Video and Webcast” section of the Encyclopedia of Polio and PPS. Please let Dr. Bruno know (email: postpolioinfo@aol.com) if you have additional videos. <https://www.papolionetwork.org/brunovideos.html>

On the topic of CPAP and a Sleep Study (3/8/2019)

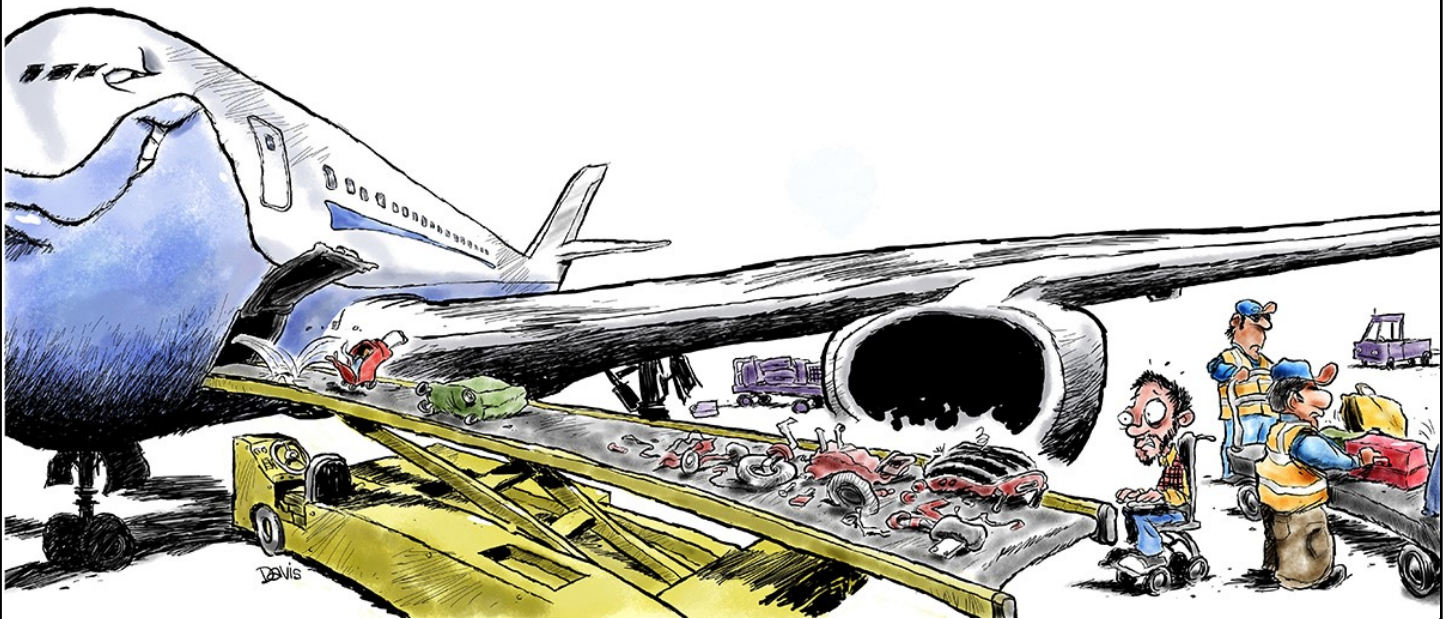
Original Post: I had a sleep test and they say I have mild to moderate apnea and recommended I use a CPAP. But most polio survivors in the Coffee House have Bi-Pap? Should I be concerned about using CPAP?

Additional Post: I had two sleep studies. The results showed that I stopped breathing an average of 43 times per hour. Used CPAP for 6 months but the average was 32 times each hour. I started using Bi-Pap 2 weeks ago and I’m feeling a little better.

Dr. Bruno’s Response: Carbon Dioxide retention is as big a problem as is too little oxygen! So polio survivors should always talk to their pulmonologist about using Bi-Pap (if not a volume ventilator), and not using CPAP.

Data Shows Airlines Damaged 1,975 Wheelchairs in Three Months

By Seth McBride April 19th, 2019



Major airlines lost or damaged 23 wheelchairs per day from December 2018 to February 2019, according to reports by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The numbers may not come as a surprise to many disabled travelers, but thanks to accessibility reforms included in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, this is the first time there has been data to confirm what is known to be an industry-wide problem. “I know from personal experience that when an airline damages a wheelchair, it is more than a simple inconvenience — it’s a complete loss of mobility and independence,”

said U.S Senator Tammy Duckworth, who uses a wheelchair as the result of combat injuries in Iraq. “No air traveler should be left in the lurch, immobile on a plane.”

Duckworth helped author language in the FAA Reauthorization Act that requires air carriers to report the number of wheelchairs and scooters they lose or damage each month, and for the FAA to include those numbers in its monthly [Air Travel Consumer Report](#). The first reports to include the data state that airlines mishandled a total of 1,975 wheelchairs and scooters between the months of December and February. Of the major carriers, American and Southwest have the highest incidence of mishandling, while Delta and United have the lowest incidence of mishandling. Of the regional air carriers, Envoy Air — a subsidiary of American Air — has the highest percentage of mishandled wheelchair and scooters.

RANK	CARRIER	DECEMBER 4 - DECEMBER 31, 2018		
		NUMBER OF WHEELCHAIRS AND SCOOTERS ENPLANED	NUMBER OF WHEELCHAIRS AND SCOOTERS MISHANDLED	PERCENT OF WHEELCHAIRS AND SCOOTERS MISHANDLED
1	SKYWEST AIRLINES	3,018	24	0.80%
2	DELTA AIR LINES	11,838	105	0.89%
3	UNITED AIRLINES	7,307	80	1.09%
4	ALASKA AIRLINES	1,126	14	1.24%
5	HAWAIIAN AIRLINES	638	13	2.04%
6	SPIRIT AIRLINES	1,442	33	2.29%
7	JETBLUE AIRWAYS	1,121	45	4.01%
8	FRONTIER AIRLINES	585	30	5.13%
9	EXPRESSJET AIRLINES	75	4	5.33%
10	SOUTHWEST AIRLINES**	2,879	186	6.46%
11	AMERICAN AIRLINES***	2,091	151	7.22%
12	ENVOY AIR	109	16	14.68%
	TOTAL	32,229	701	2.18%

According to John Morris of [WheelchairTravel.org](#), “Since the data is based only on damage reported by passengers, it is important for wheelchair users to file a claim each time a mobility device is mishandled, even if the damage is minor or cosmetic.”

In the initial report, both American and Southwest failed to accurately track the total number of wheelchairs and scooters brought onto their aircraft. This negatively affected their ranking, which is based on the percentage of wheelchairs and scooters mishandled. In the most recent report, Southwest fixed the tracking issue, while American did not. “American has indicated to the Department that it is enhancing its process to reliably capture all reportable enplaned wheelchairs and scooters, which may take a few months,” the report stated.

The numbers are likely to change as more monthly reports are issued and there’s a larger sample size to analyze, but wheelchair users now have some valuable information when choosing which airline to fly.

Doctor's Tip: Immunizations: Seeing is believing

Health | June 2, 2019

Dr. Bill Flood Doctor's Tip

Dr. Bill Flood is a pediatrician who joined Glenwood Medical Associates in 1974, where he worked as a pediatrician for several years, after which he opened his own office in Glenwood. He was well-liked by the kids he treated and their parents, and was well-respected by his colleagues. Following his practice here, he lived and worked in Saipan for several years, and then on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. Over the years he has also worked in American Samoa, Haiti and Africa. He and his wife recently retired to their home in Glenwood. At my request, Dr. Flood was kind enough to write the following guest column. — Greg Feinsinger, M.D.

We often want to see for ourselves and not believe what someone else tells us. While this is a good sentiment, there are times it may not work.

How many doctors and patients have ever seen a case of tetanus, seen an infant's entire body stiff as a board, unable to breathe, die from tetanus? Or someone deformed, blind or deaf from rubella?

How many have diagnosed a case of polio, or seen someone drag themselves down a dirt path on their knees because their legs were paralyzed by polio?

I have seen all of these, and I believe. I believe in the power of immunizations.

The public, you, is rightfully skeptical of all the advice you get from so many different sources. Is a glass of red wine good, or bad? Is taking zinc helpful, or harmful? What about all the tests that doctors recommend? PSA for men? Breast self-examination for women? Vitamins? No vitamins? Which vitamins? It is hard to know who to listen to, what to do.

But there is one standout recommendation that works — immunizations. Seeing is believing.

Tetanus is no longer seen in American nurseries. The cases I saw were in Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world. Tetanus is still there — a life-robbing disease.

Polio is all but eliminated in the West. When I was growing up, before we had a vaccine, parents lived in fear every summer when epidemics occurred. We were not allowed to go the swimming pool, or drink from water fountains, because no one understood how polio was spread. My best friend spent weeks in an iron lung. Even as surviving adults, those who had polio now suffer a painful and weakening condition called "post-polio syndrome." But for those who received the polio vaccine, this is all history. Polio is all but gone from our part of the world.

And measles? Measles is a viral infection, and children typically receive an immunization at age 1 and a booster when they are older. I had measles and remember having to stay in a dark room, my eyes draining and painful, feverish, coughing. I recovered, but others are left with blindness, deafness, even death. Measles is not harmless, or gone.

Immunizations work in two important ways. First, when you receive an immunization your body responds just like it would if you had an infection. You produce protective antibodies. You may need a booster later to keep this protection, but as long as your level is high enough, you are safe. The second way immunizations work is by protecting those around you. If everyone in your classroom has been immunized and is protected from measles, then even if one person exposes your class to measles, it still will not spread because everyone, or almost everyone, is immune. This is "herd immunity." But if half of the class is not immune, did not have the vaccine, then that same exposure can spread to all the unimmunized children, and from them to their unimmunized friends and family. This is how an epidemic begins.

So if you don't immunize, you are not only putting your child at risk, but others who could be exposed to an infection carried by your child. We owe it to our children, and to each other, to stop these crippling and deadly diseases. And we can.

You don't have to see these horrible diseases to believe. Please immunize your children.

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*It is better to be a young June bug than an
old bird of paradise.*

Mark Twain

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